



Town of Groton, Connecticut

Meeting Minutes

Town Council

45 Fort Hill Road
Groton, CT 06340-4394
Town Clerk 860-441-6640
Town Manager
860-441-6630

Mayor Rita M. Schmidt, Councilors Genevieve Cerf, Joe de la Cruz, Bruce S. Flax, Bob Frink, Rich Moravsik, Deborah L. Peruzzotti, Heather Bond Somers and Harry A. Watson

Tuesday, February 4, 2014

7:30 PM

Town Hall Annex - Community Room 1

REGULAR MEETING

I. ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 7:41 p.m. by Mayor Schmidt.

Members Present: Mayor Schmidt, Councilor Cerf, Councilor Flax, Councilor Frink, Councilor Moravsik, Councilor Peruzzotti, Councilor Somers and Councilor Watson

Also present were Town Manager Mark Oefinger, Town Clerk Betsy Moukawsher and Office Assistant Lori Watrous.

II. SALUTE TO THE FLAG

The Salute to the Flag was led by Alton Jones, Spencer Jones and William Robinson.

III. RECOGNITION, AWARDS & MEMORIALS

None.

IV. RECEIPT OF CITIZENS' PETITIONS, COMMENTS AND CONCERNS

Gretchen Chipperini, 87 Phoenix Drive, stated that she is interested in marketing her frontage property on Route 12 along with the William Seeley School property as a possible location for a lifestyle center which would include cinemas, shops and restaurants. She is concerned that executive sessions have taken place regarding the disposition of the William Seeley School property for a proposed movie theatre. Ms. Chipperini has more information to present to the Council before they make a decision on this property.

V. RESPONSES TO CITIZENS' PETITIONS, COMMENTS AND CONCERNS

Per Councilor Flax's suggestion, Ms. Chipperini requested that she be put on the Committee of the Whole agenda.

VI. CONSENT CALENDAR

a. Deletions from the Town Council Referral List

2014-0037 Battle of Mystic Battlefield Project Update by Kevin McBride

This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - No further action on the Consent Calendar.

2014-0039 Request to Donate Piano to Groton Regency

This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken on the Consent Calendar.

2014-0040 Request to Transfer Funds to Arts Cafe Mystic

This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken on the Consent Calendar.

2014-0041 2014 Rates for Shennecossett Golf Course

This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken on the Consent Calendar.

2014-0043 Public Hearing on Small Cities Community Development Block Grant 2014 Application

This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken on the Consent Calendar.

2014-0044 Debt Policy and Management/Fiscal Practices Amendment to Increase the General Fund's Unassigned Fund Balance

This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken on the Consent Calendar.

Passed The Consent Calendar

A motion was made by Councilor Watson, seconded by Councilor Peruzzotti, to adopt the Consent Calendar, including all the preceding items marked as having been adopted on the Consent Calendar.

The motion carried unanimously

VII. COMMUNICATION REPORTS (Other than Committee Reports)

a. Town Councilors

Councilors received communications regarding Groton Open Space Association in reference to the Tilcon property; downtown Mystic merchants' snow removal; the disposition of the William Seeley School property; an RFP for the Town Attorney; additional members for the Economic Development Commission; and the Police Department.

Councilors attended a joint meeting with the City Council.

Councilor Somers announced that Beth Robinson was the recipient of the Tall Ships America Award. Ms. Robinson is a member of the Boating Advisory Committee.

Councilor Cerf met with the group proposing the Noank School Community Garden, met with Beth Robinson regarding police boat safety, and attended the City of Groton's freemen's meeting.

Councilor Frink met with the Town's Finance Director regarding the CAFR.

Mayor Schmidt, along with the Town Manager, met with Rod MacKenzie of Pfizer.

b. Clerk of the Representative Town Meeting

The next regular RTM meeting will be held on February 12, 2014, at the Senior Center.

c. Clerk of the Council

The Town Clerk encouraged the public to apply for vacancies on boards and commissions. Ms. Moukawsher attended a Rotary meeting.

d. Town Manager

The Town Manager announced that the Bill Memorial Library will host a "Jazz and Chocolate" event on February 9, 2014, and the Groton Education Foundation will host a "Dancing with the Stars" event on March 21, 2014.

The Town Manager stated that the Pfizer facility in Groton is unique. No matter where an idea for a drug begins, it is developed at the Groton facility. He noted that Building 118 will be down by early summer and will begin to affect tax rolls next year.

e. Town Attorney

No report.

VIII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Temporary Rules Committee

Councilor Frink noted that the Temporary Rules Committee met January 29, 2014.

b. Personnel/Appointments/Rules

Councilor Flax stated that the Personnel/Appointments/Rules Committee met tonight.

c. Committee of the Whole

Mayor Schmidt noted that the following items were discussed at the Committee of the Whole meeting: an update on the Mystic Battlefield Project; pending litigation; the FYE 2015 budget; the Town Attorney appointment; Council goals; an update on the Thames Street Rehabilitation

Project; the townwide police assessment; economic development; the disposition of William Seeley School; and the items on tonight's agenda.

IX. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

X. NEW BUSINESS

2014-0039 Request to Donate Piano to Groton Regency

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING DONATION OF A TOWN-OWNED PIANO TO GROTON REGENCY

WHEREAS, the Groton Senior Center has received a donation of a new electric piano, and

WHEREAS, the upright piano used by the Senior Center since it was donated to the Town in 1981 is now surplus, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Town Council hereby approves the donation of the upright piano to the Groton Regency.

A motion was made by Councilor Watson, seconded by Councilor Peruzzotti, that this matter be Adopted.

The motion carried unanimously

2014-0040 Request to Transfer Funds to Arts Cafe Mystic

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING DONATION OF UNEXPENDED FUNDS FROM THE ARTS CAFE PROGRAM TO THE ARTS CAFE MYSTIC ORGANIZATION

WHEREAS, the Town of Groton held its final Arts Cafe Mystic program in 2010, and

WHEREAS, Arts Cafe programming is now sponsored by a non-profit community organization, and

WHEREAS, there are unexpended funds in the amount of \$571.75 remaining in an account designated for Arts Cafe Mystic programming, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Town Council hereby approves the donation of \$571.75 to the Arts Cafe Mystic organization.

A motion was made by Councilor Moravsik, seconded by Councilor Peruzzotti, that this matter be Adopted.

The motion carried unanimously

2014-0041 2014 Rates for Shennecossett Golf Course

RESOLUTION SETTING 2014 RATES FOR THE SHENNECOSSETT GOLF COURSE

WHEREAS, the Golf Advisory Board and the Parks and Recreation Commission have reviewed and recommended changes to the fees for the Shennecossett Golf Course for 2014, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the municipal golf course rates for 2014 shall be the rates as attached to this resolution.

A motion was made by Councilor Frink, seconded by Councilor Moravsik, that this matter be Adopted.

The motion carried unanimously

2014-0043 Public Hearing on Small Cities Community Development Block Grant 2014 Application

RESOLUTION SETTING A PUBLIC HEARING ON THE SMALL CITIES COMMUNITY

DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT 2014 APPLICATION

RESOLVED, that the Town Council will hold a public hearing on the Town of Groton's Small Cities Community Development Block Grant 2014 Application on Tuesday, February 18, 2014 at 7:30 p.m. at Town Hall Annex, Community Room 1.

A motion was made, seconded by Councilor Peruzzotti, that this matter be Adopted.

The motion carried unanimously

2014-0044**Debt Policy and Management/Fiscal Practices Amendment to Increase the General Fund's Unassigned Fund Balance**

RESOLUTION INCREASING THE GENERAL FUND'S UNASSIGNED FUND BALANCE

WHEREAS, for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2013, revenues exceeded expenditures by approximately \$2.3 million, and

WHEREAS, because of that, the Fund Balance Applied of approximately \$1.5 million for FYE 2013 was not required, and

WHEREAS, the Town's Debt Policy and Management/Fiscal Practices reads that the Town shall maintain "An unassigned General Fund reserve maintained in an amount equal to at least seven and one-half (7.5%) percent of annual general fund expenditures", and

WHEREAS, the Town has an Aa2 bond rating from Moody's Investors Service and the Town's unassigned fund balance percentage is below the median (11.1%) and mean (11.2%) of other Aa2 Connecticut municipalities, and

WHEREAS, due to the positive results of operations for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2013, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Town Council amends its Debt Policy and Management/Fiscal Practices and increases the General Fund's unassigned fund balance to an amount equal to at least seven and three-quarters (7.75%) percent of the annual general fund expenditures.

A motion was made by Councilor Peruzzotti, seconded by Councilor Frink, that this matter be Adopted.

The Town Manager noted that during the course of the year the General Fund increases. At the end of the year, the amount that is over the approved percentage is applied to the next year's budget.

Councilor Peruzzotti remarked that increasing to 7.75% will only represent an additional \$300,000 being placed into the General Fund.

The motion carried unanimously

XI. OTHER BUSINESS

Councilor Moravsik requested that the referral for budget discussion be placed on the Committee of the Whole agenda for its February 11, 2014, meeting.

2014-0059**Policy on Assignment of Playing Fields**

POLICY ON ASSIGNMENT OF PLAYING FIELDS

Councilor Flax requested a referral to have Parks and Recreation Director Mark Berry explain to the Council how playing fields are assigned.

Other Business Continued

The Town Manager listed items that will appear on the next few agendas. There was concern that when there is not enough time during a meeting, items are shifted to special meetings which are not televised. The Town Manager noted that the Council sets the policy on what is televised and

the current policy is to televise only regular meetings.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn at 8:29 p.m. was made by Councilor Moravsik, seconded by Councilor Flax and so voted unanimously.

Attest:

*Betsy Moukawsher, Town Clerk
Clerk of the Council*

Lori Watrous, Office Assistant